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TRINITY

REVIEW

SPRING  
1968

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HARTFORD, CONN.

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*Margaret's Dance*

Once there was a young boy and a woman named Margaret and Margaret knitted the boy a sweater once and gave it to him at Christmas time and the boy unravelled the sweater bit by bit and slowly burned the yarn.

Margaret? Margaret spoke in words that held him fascinated. "Bitch" and "pregnant" and her small circle of friends drew him to the outside of her gatherings at sunset, drew him to their sidewalk rituals after dinner. He was never the only boy there; others were also attracted. But they always taunted the four or five girls who always came, taunted them mercilessly. He would come only to listen to Margaret, to hear her half-laugh and see her throw back her head in joy.

At twelve he had few friends, fewer even than he was to have at Margaret's age, seventeen. But his summer was comfortably uncluttered. He would get up when his mother left for work at eight, rising as soon as he heard her get out of the car and close the gate of the chain link fence after her. He would wait every morning until he heard the gate close before he got up.

Television, breakfast, television, lunch; then perhaps he would spend some time in the garage they had built in their back yard. Sitting on a work bench, he would smoke a few cigarettes and stare blankly at the neatly arranged, carefully organized rows of tools. Then he might wander around the yard for a while, sometimes even daring to smoke in the open.

Once he saw Margaret dance in her yard. She lived in the corner house, the one the neighbors were ashamed of. Everything was overgrown; great masses of ivy running up and then drooping over one part of the house; grass was creeping over their unused cement driveway; pinecones littered the entire yard. Hundreds of pine cones that fell from the enormous pine tree that stood firmly rooted in the center of the yard. Long ago the house itself had been painted yellow but it had since faded into a grotesque off-white that looked almost brown beneath the growing tangle of vines. Often, whenever they had one of their storms, whenever he would look out of his window and see the tree bending in the wind, he would be sure that it would fall, fall and crash

heavily into the diseased, hidden house and the disordered, cluttered, overgrown yard.

He saw her dancing in the back yard. She was on their small patio and seemed to be listening to music although he never heard any. He had wandered into her yard from one of the neighbor's and he watched from behind part of the patio wall. At first, lying on a lawn chair, she would just snap her fingers and jerk her head to some unheard music.

Whenever Margaret laughed, really laughed, he would always feel embarrassed. It always seemed as though she were doing something wrong. The laugh always ended with a sort of moan, trailing off; and she would always bend her head down so she could look up with her eyes smiling. There just always seemed to be something wrong, something that you felt she knew about you, something wrong.

He couldn't hear the music, he could only watch her dance. She was standing now; it was dusk and he could make out only her form as she moved through the yard. She was dressed in purple, and the dress was loose; clean underneath. She lifted her arms and seemed to move beneath them; swaying barefoot in her cluttered yard. He never saw Margaret close up, and even now could not make out the features of her face. But he could hear her softly laugh; with no one to hear, softly laughing and moaning as she danced alone.

He wanted to stop her; what she was doing was wrong, touching herself like that. But he stood still and watched, pressing himself hard against the patio wall. She danced until it grew quite dark, stopping when the sun had completely vanished. Seeing that she was through, he started to move away but he ran into a small, concrete garden image of a tiny boy; the statue had been tipped over and was lying on its side. She heard the noise and turned. He couldn't move for a full minute when he realized that she had noticed and was staring, smiling, but finally he turned and ran away, terrified. She watched him running and she threw back her head and laughed.

Once after that, Margaret and her friends were celebrating New Year's. At the same corner where they gathered at dusk, they gathered to set off fireworks. He watched quietly from a few houses away. But soon, drawn forward, he moved closer. They had placed an immense firework fountain in the middle of the street. He was attracted by the red and blue fire foaming out of it onto the asphalt. The girls were all loud, screaming, happy, obscene. He heard Margaret's thick laugh distinct from all of them. He noticed that she merely watched the flames, occasionally flicking out her tongue to moisten her lips. He had come too close, however. Margaret had seen him. She seemed to recognize him and smiled her knowing, uncomfortable smile.

She ran like most women run, bent over at the waist, their heads still, apparently only their legs moving. She caught up to him just as

he entered his yard. They both fell over on his well kept, freshly cut grass together. She was much stronger than he was; she kept telling him to be happy, to celebrate; climbing on top of him. He struggled violently, with tears in his eyes, screaming for her to get off. But she would only get off after, having pinned his arms outstretched with hers, she forced his teeth open with her tongue and stopped his squirming and silenced his struggling protests.

Once there was a young boy and a woman named Margaret and Margaret knitted the boy a sweater once and gave it to him at Christmas time and the boy unravelled the sweater bit by bit and slowly burned the yarn.

*Robert Pippin*



*The Music House*

Most thought it a useless house; painted white; long ago faded into chipped, flaked paint: it stood empty. A useless house, it had stood empty for about five years.

Right after the last tenants had moved out, someone, probably a child, a child tempted by the ugliness of the building, had broken every window. Now it stood diseased; gaping, black holes staring out from from it; the wood along the eaves rotting away. Sometimes Mr. Dulles would mow the lawn if it got too terribly high; it wouldn't do for the house to look too disorderly, it was next door to Mr. Dulles. The government was supposed to take care of that though. The government owned the mortgage since the last tenants had bought the house through the Veteran's Administration. Sometimes the neighbors would complain and the government would hire one of the neighborhood children to fix up the yard. The children enjoyed the house. For them it was a place to wrap in mystery, to avoid at night, to dare each other with.

So that, when the neighborhood awoke on Friday morning to find the house being repaired, they were not a little surprised. Apparently the house had been sold and yet who would buy it? Their's was a community of gas station and small store owners and carpenters and civil service employees. Whoever it was who bought the house, they had paid only half of what everybody else has paid for theirs; of that they could be sure. They wondered who it could be. For a short time there was a rumor that the family was colored, but that was soon found to be false.

"Now, I don't mind a man being poor; just so long as he's honest."

"That's right. All we ask is for them to be decent and respectable. We don't mean to be snobs."

"I heard they got a lot of kids."

"That don't matter. As long as they're clean and honest, that's all we ask."

Murmurs of assent.

And such was the conversation that presaged the arrival of Charles Lloyd and his family.

The government had fixed the house up inside and out. It was again painted white with a neat green trim. The inside was all done over too. So that the house stood ready for the occupancy of Charles Lloyd. Virginia Dellinger, who usually knew about such things, had found out that they would move in on the next Saturday and the neighborhood got ready to appraise.

As a matter of fact, Mrs. Dellinger had found out quite a bit about

the Lloyds. Her husband worked for the city and she could usually get him to find out such things. Harold would usually do what she wanted. A man with enormous black and red tattoos all over his body; a man who smiled rarely and never spoke; yet he would do what she wanted. Even after Eugene had been sent to the Institute, after Virginia's screaming had sent him to sitting on their porch, fondling himself in low whimpers. Harold would still do her bidding. She had found out, through him, that Charles Lloyd worked as a heavy equipment operator for the state. They all had a good laugh over that. Poverty was a word they liked to hear, they liked to listen to themselves mouth it, hear themselves discuss it.

The moving van arrived at eight thirty Saturday morning. Piles of faded furniture; no carpets; battered, old mahogany tables; gray kitchen chairs and tables; bunk beds for the children; cracked mirrors; clothes packed in card board boxes and paper bags; a table radio. The gathering at Virginia's to assess. Eugene home for the weekend as usual, on the front porch, drooling, whimpering. Faces peering out of Virginia's picture window. Smoky hours of conversation, cackling laughs, sighs and low chuckles. Eugene weeping softly; Virginia pleading with him to shut up. The smell of coffee and Virginia's rasping voice.

"And so when I realized what had happened to Eugene because of Harold, I decided right then to leave him." (lowering her voice, bending over) "But I was afraid he'd kill me if I did. You know him."

Nods of approval.

"So I figured I'd suffer through it. God knows how I've got this far with an imbecile son and a crazy husband." (Shaking her head and sipping her coffee) "And so now, every weekend I have to put up with Harold being home and Eugene sitting around, moaning like a sick cow."

Now and then Virginia would lean out the door to the front porch and demand that Eugene shut up his "bellowing". The women stayed until two in the morning; after a while all slightly drunk on Harold's beer.

Harold had been watching television in their tiny "den". She hurried into him, excited after her friends had gone, her face red, her fat arms waving.

"Did you *see* them, Harold- Did you *see* them?"

"Yeah, I saw them."

"Well did you ever . . ."

"Did I ever what?"

"Honestly Harold. Don't you have any pride in anything? Did you see the way he looked. I don't know, maybe we can get up some kind of petition."

"A what?"

"A petition, stupid."

"What for?"

"What for! Why, to get them out of here. We don't want no com-



mon trash in this neighborhood."

Harold sighed.

"Where's Eugene?" he asked.

"Shit! Damn, stupid . . ." she muttered as she ran to the front porch to bring him inside.

Eugene had been out of high school for five years now. One day, in the summer after he graduated, Virginia reported her "stupid son" missing. The police searched for him for two days, thinking finally he had been kidnapped. But he was discovered. They found him, barely clothed, dirty, his face streaked with tears. He was hiding huddled in the corner of the empty house with the broken windows; softly singing to himself; fondling himself in low whimpers. He refused to come out of the corner when they tried to move him and they finally had to send for the ambulance from the state mental hospital in Jackson. The neighbors all pitied Virginia for what she had to go through with Eugene. They knew she had enough problems with Harold (somehow it had gotten to be common knowledge that they didn't sleep together any more) and they sympathized with this extra burden on an already unhappy life.

For a long while, almost two weeks, hardly anything was noticeable about the house Charles Lloyd had moved into. The children were mostly kept indoors. He went to work at five thirty, taking the early bus. Occasionally the children could be seen playing in the back yard; five children, all under eight years old. They made a little noise but they were children after all.

Even though she lived across the street, Virginia was the first to notice the music. "Three o'clock in the morning!" she would exclaim, her bulging eyes rolling in their sockets. "Three o'clock in the morning?" Soon others began to hear it; some even stayed awake to listen for it. Soft strains of country and western music would float hollow in the morning air. The music was always scratchy and was always in very "bad taste".

The music, soft as it was, woke Virginia up, every night. Soon it got to the point where she couldn't sleep because she knew that the music would wake her. The whole thing frustrated her to tears. She would demand that Harold do something, anything, just to stop the music. Harold would sigh. So that, after a while, she decided to do something herself. She decided to speak to him herself; to confront him about the racket he was producing. It took her a week to finally get up the nerve; she kept thinking what his reaction would be; whether he would start yelling at her or whether he would get violent. She didn't trust his poverty.

He came home the same way every night, walking past Virginia's house on the way back from the bus stop. She watched for him and

hurried out of the door when she saw him, waving her fat arms at him, speaking as she walked towards him.

"Oh, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Lloyd, I've been meaning to . . ."

Charles Lloyd just ignored her, kept on walking. He left her standing in her driveway; frustrated, incensed.

Nobody mentioned it for a long time after that, except to occasionally remark that the music was still to be heard for those who wanted to listen. They also remarked from time to time how odd it was that there were never any lights on inside the house when the music played. Only a shadow moving in front of the window now and then. Only a few shadows; never any lights.

When Eugene was home on weekends he would always like to play with the Lloyd children. He seemed to enjoy them more than he had enjoyed anything for years. Early in the morning he would run to their house and, giggling, press the doorbell until someone answered. He could be seen playing until about ten o'clock when Virginia would get up and notice him gone. Screaming "Twenty-two years old! Twenty-two years old!" she would drag him home; her face bloated and red.

"Harold, you'll have to do something."

"About what?"

"About the Lloyd animals. Eugene is over there all the time."

"So?" He hadn't raised his eyes from his newspaper.

Exasperated, she would storm into the bathroom and lock the door, and for hours, weeping, she would pull a comb through her wiry hair viciously, painfully, as she muttered and wept and complained and wept.

After the fourth time Virginia found Eugene with the Lloyd children, She decided to do something. After all, she had once even seen two of the youngest children playing in the street completely naked. Like animals. So Virginia decided to speak to someone about it; but she found no listeners. Oh, everyone agreed with her; that wasn't the problem. The Lloyds were definitely lowering the standards of the neighborhood. But it was just that there wasn't anything that could be done. The Lloyds, after all, did own the house.

Eugene liked to pull his knees up to his chest and sing quietly for hours. He liked to turn round and round and make himself dizzy and then sit and laugh as everything continued to whirl around him. He hated for things to remain still before him and would roll his head back and forth to make the objects move until his mother would slap him and scream for him to "stop acting like a complete fool". He would often, after scenes like that, withdraw into the bathroom and prick the ends of his fingers with a straight pin, forming intricate designs with the upraised flesh. But he liked especially to play with the Lloyd children when he was home on vacation. He taught them how to whirl themselves dizzy and he would feel no greater happiness than when he could make one



of them laugh by picking the child up and tossing him into the air. His visits home were much happier for him now that the Lloyds were there.

But Virginia was not so happy with Charles Lloyd and his family. In desperation, she finally called the police about the music. She claimed that it was keeping her awake and that it was disturbing the peace. The police came at three o'clock and listened for the music. They couldn't hear it when Virginia first pointed it out to them and they had to move across the street to hear it. They asked if her neighbors were also being kept awake by it and she said she didn't think so. The police claimed that there was, then, nothing they could do; the music was obviously being played at a reasonable volume and perhaps Mrs. Dellinger was just a little nervous.

The music woke her up every night. It began to sound as if it were being played next to her ear. She didn't want to be made a fool of again; word of her last attempt to humiliate the Lloyds had spread rapidly. Now the music seemed shrieking. Now it seemed to shake the foundations of the house. She tried to bury herself in her pillows; despising the filthy, coarse, diseased, debauched, stinking Lloyds.

Each night it got worse. All that week, at three o'clock, she would rise to watch the dark house. Its windows were nothing but gaping black holes; occasionally a shadow. Virginia would often sit until sunrise, her hands pressed hard against the sides of her head, weeping softly.

The next weekend, when her son came home for a visit, Virginia would not allow him out of doors at all. She made him sit in his room with the door locked from the outside. And that morning, at about three o'clock, Eugene could hear his mother weeping. Eugene wept too, frightened. His mother screamed for him to shut up but Eugene couldn't help it now; he kept weeping in long, loud moans. Not even stopping when he heard the latch on his door rattling and saw his mother screaming at him as she rushed into his room; calling him all the names that had driven him to his madness. She ripped off his glasses and slapped his pimpled face again and again. In hoarse screams, she told him how he had ruined her life, tying her down for years; tied down by an imbecile son. She hated him, she would scream, slapping; she hated him. Eugene didn't reply; only occasionally moaning in a low voice and rolling his head from side to side.

That morning, a Sunday, Eugene tried to swallow a handful of straight pins but he could only get down a few before he started gagging blood. They took him to the hospital and performed surgery. The doctors assured Virginia that no permanent damage was done.

Virginia blamed the Lloyds. She claimed that their music had driven him to it; that their music was driving her mad too. She got a lawyer and filed suit. She charged that the Lloyds were causing her



"extreme mental hardship" and that they showed "wanton disregard for common courtesy".

It took a while to serve the writ. No one ever came to the door when they rang the bell. In the meanwhile, Virginia had tried all sorts of means to stop the music at night. She made Harold switch bedrooms; she stuffed her ears with wax; but she would always rise at three o'clock to listen and weep. From three until sunrise, she would sit, gently rocking back and forth, weeping.

She went with the lawyer finally; she was bound to drag the Lloyds into court. She rang the bell and didn't let up for five full minutes until someone finally came to the door. Mr. Lloyd answered the bell, dressed in dungarees, with no shirt. The lawyer shoved the papers into his confused hands and explained when he had to be in court. Mr. Lloyd smiled gently, terribly bewildered. All three of them just stared at each other for a while. Finally Virginia and her lawyer walked away, leaving Mr. Lloyd standing in the doorway, confused. He just stood there for half an hour, staring into the neighborhood.

They were gone the next morning and no one ever found out when or how they got their furniture out. The neighbors simply awoke to find the house empty; useless. Someone had, during the night also, broken all the windows and smashed the inside of the house to pieces. Within a week, the government had taken it back over again.

Virginia was happy but unsettled. Eugene got better and was sent back to the Institute but Virginia didn't allow them to send him back for his weekends. She claimed that, under the circumstances, it would be much too dangerous.

*Robert Pippin*

*the taking away*

the taking away of his prayer day  
 and the falling out of his white age;  
 around comes Clara  
 carrying him on a tray  
 rasping impatiently that  
     they're all here    they're all here  
     set up                      set up  
 the removing of his spectacles  
 the trembling at the ends of his arms;  
 their voices murmur pleasantly  
 to Clara running about  
     of their expecting him to cry  
     of their waiting for him to dream  
 the grayness of his patient stares  
 and the lifting him up to hello

Now all make mad the alive of him dying  
 as Burning hot to crack  
 the white prison of his Tomb  
 he says to say  
 he will not suffer them their pleasure  
 he will not!

Their quiet sighs,  
 They're all here,  
 He simply dies.

They touch him  
 Wanting his warmth;  
 Soft again  
 As when alive,  
 Their quiet sighs,  
 He simply dies.

*Pippin.*

from an inside light  
a reflection of me  
staring  
the cold nightfall outside  
was all i could perceive  
but even this is no longer  
as the exterior cold  
has formed a dulling frost  
which corrodes  
the interior pane  
so that  
i can't even mirror my eyes.

the colors we kaleidoscope  
are endless churning bits of glass  
that are held  
by an amorphous liquid  
as a pattern  
mirrored out in multiform  
but the particles of our sight  
can be fragmented  
and strewn on the ground  
for anyone's dry observation  
and the colors  
once seen  
then become an inert gray  
so that in reflection  
the blood of our life  
comes out as tears  
when we step on and destroy that instrument.

we have tongues in our daily life  
but we know  
that the colors we put on  
as a leaf in beginning fall  
is a game  
infinite in its sterile moves  
and that we cannot touch to grasp  
for each is the other's fantasy  
so we depart  
running the wood by  
gasping in our chase  
of another life  
who would say to us  
that our movement has meaning  
but there is only the bleak trees  
losing their color  
to the cold earth  
and so we stop  
as our breath is caught in the afternoon sky  
to become  
the end of autumn falling down  
with its leaves crisp  
our bodies are curling in  
with the sap dry  
our wrists are slashed to bleed  
and the earth  
has a mighty frost  
covering our skin  
as we have come  
finally  
to accept  
the silence of a faint white on the ground.

*a series*

1.

the i playing  
with an emptied eye  
tense in creation  
wants lines to sketch form  
upon the quick moment  
of the movement of my mind  
full of fleeting people placed  
in my running song  
babbling through the time  
of some above beginning  
to no  
end

2.

i  
am lost to the other's eyes  
when i see myself  
as a stilled face  
within their mirror sight  
of me known  
as a death.

3.

in just morn  
admist a white walk of snow  
the bare gray tree  
is me fallen  
to scar the earth  
and here  
as the snowy silence surrounds  
my skin will sense  
the final dawning of my birth  
as the pale moon  
was the only light of my steps  
and ending  
stripped by early clouds of day  
i lie exposed.

4.

my past  
has given  
to my skin  
the gray  
of a caked white  
on a cracked frozen ground.

5.

we are always taken  
by our movement  
to dead leaves  
brown with a glowing bed  
waiting  
for us to tumble  
in a love's falling through  
to the soft mulch  
below  
black  
wanting us.

6.

coming  
the white cold erasing all  
and we cry  
the ice wind forced  
through our eyes  
leaves us freezing  
tears caught  
to drip frost  
and caged  
by lashes frozen still  
we become blind to the beyond ourselves.

7.

as my feet  
were later lapped numb  
by the cold  
i  
through the remembrance  
of overlooked cliffs cascading down  
see my eyes  
following the flight  
of seawings lost to the wind  
and with my arms waiting  
i too thought  
to fall the air through  
thinking this the crash to the overall sea.

8.

moth wings flutter  
drafts of cold whispers  
still  
in me.

*Gerald Pryor*



*Water Color*

Reporter: Mr. Casals, if you could speak to the whole world over television, what would you say?

Pablo Casals: First I would tell them to end war. Then I would play them Bach.

Floating through the Bach, Roger did not think about the waters that rose, whispering death. Orders had been given and curfews set and the Police stalked the silent streets with orders to shoot those who would try to leave, to seek friends or relatives, for to leave one would have to go through the waters. And the waters, seeping gradually in puddles and streams nearer and nearer, brought death. So the people in the high-grounded city, isolated and frightened behind their windows, looked out and wondered why there was no word from New York and from London and from Washington and wondered if perhaps they were the last people on earth, yet in the college on the hill in the high city, Roger lay on his bed and drifted with the Bach and did not look out.

Less and less now came the thoughts of the waters that he did not dread or of the others who scurrying about in the hall planned and hoped for reprieve. At first he had acquiesced, aware of their tragic desperation, and allowed himself to be ruled, to the small degree their rules could affect him, by their gropings and whinings. But as weeks passed since the beginning of their isolation, he grew more and more distant from them, ignoring or rather being totally unaware of their presence around him while he was submerged in his own thoughts.

Even Anderson, their leader, had not come again after that one last time when he had struck out angrily at Roger for sending Billin away . . . but no, that had not been why Anderson did it, for Billin had been before, weeks before, before even the gathering of the water, as Roger referred to that first day.

Then, too, he had been absorbed in his music, disturbed by the knocking on his door. Roger had a doorbell, made out of a small Indian bell and a coat hanger, but no one rang it, since he always let the string to it hang on the inside of his door. More and more knocking, until finally Anderson came in uninvited, his face brushing against the hanging string as he entered.

"What's this?"

"My doorbell."

"Why do you keep it inside then?"

"I don't like visitors. What do you want?"



"I can't find Billin. We're having a meeting in my room now, and no one has seen him. I thought you might know where he was."

Roger still thought of Billin in the moments when he still thought consciously, and wondered if he was alive or how he had died. Billin was a quiet freshman who had built a meek friendship with him, shyly coming in to show him poems or admire his paintings. But Anderson, the leader of the hall who viewed all freshmen as his charges, did not approve of this friendship. Anderson considered Roger an interloper on his domain, a lone wolf who would prey on unwary sheep straying from the flock who escaped his own watchful eye. Roger recalled the comments overheard through the door, about "artsy-craftsy incense burners" and wondered at the scorn Anderson had for him.

Billin had come to Roger because he wanted to leave and try to make it up to his girlfriend's school. The threat of the waters had hit the college like a cataract, splattering people towards home or a girl or some special place where it would be best to die or wait and hope for safety. But that had been mostly before the curfew that made it death to walk the streets, and it was after the curfew that Billin decided he wanted to go. So he had come to Roger for advice and Roger had nodded to him and climbed the chapel tower to watch him, tightening the straps on his pack as he slipped from shadow to shadow, alert for sounds of patrol cars, melting into the night.

And Roger had told Anderson when Billin had left and why.

"You idiot! Don't you know about the curfew? He'll be shot before he gets a mile! Why didn't you stop him? Why didn't you send him to me?"

But Roger had not told Anderson why Billin had not gone to him. He did not tell him that the only choice left to make, the only design left to plan was the design for dying. Anderson had other plans. After authority at the college had collapsed and the administrators and teachers had locked up and gone away, it had been Anderson who began to organize, discouraging those who wished to leave, saying again and again, "We're on high ground. If we stay here and stick together, we'll survive, and when they figure out how to stop the waters, we'll be safe." Roger had not told Anderson that this flood could not be fought by rationing food and toothpaste, that submission and not defiance was the only answer.

He had not even argued when Anderson had come back, after storming out in anger, to tell Roger what he had to do if he wanted to stay in the hall, about the 24 hour radio watch and the latrine pit and the demand for all his candles. Though he thought these things were the most pathetic of twitchings and delusions, he wanted no arguments, no friction to interrupt his own slide into the rising waters.

And on his bed, alone in the music, he remembered little concerning

the other people in the hall, and few of the days since that first day. But that day he remembered better than most of the days since, days that grew introspectively timeless and hazy as the waters seeped closer and the food gave out and misty-visions, Roger listened to the music and painted and forgot where he was. That day he marked as a beginning. It was the gathering of the water. On the evening that Billin left, Anderson decided that they should gather all the water they could since the reservoir might become polluted by the rising of the other waters, and told Roger he must empty all his jars of paint and fill them with water for the store.

He remembered feeling absurd as he washed his paints down the drain and filled the tiny jars with water and added them to the stack of paper cups and plastic bags and hollow water filled lamps that crowded one of the vacant rooms. He had taken care to hide several jars of water color among his socks, for the one last painting he wanted to do, but placing the jars, transparent now, on the stack he had felt like he was taking part in some hopeless ritual of sacrifice or appeasement to an unchangeable god, and he felt vaguely sorry for Anderson and the others who would look hopefully to the sky for a sign, trying to stave off the flood that was about to crash upon them rather than merging and accepting and becoming a part of it.

The air in the days that passed since that day rippled and danced, overture to the waters that would come, and Roger felt at times as if the waters had reached him already and that he was already slipping gently into the waves, that when he was listening or painting he was coming closer and closer to the end of a dream and that waking would be soon. When he was painting . . .

At the end of the first week, with the three jars of water color he had saved and a little of his drinking water, he had begun a painting. Spidery lines and intricate baroque designs, drawn with a patience that sprang from his lightheadedness, began to build into a huge and mighty wave, deep and thick, that spring an immense tense tauntness curving over the shadowy and slight human form that crouched beneath it. Slowly, inevitably it grew and each day loomed larger and larger, arching and towering, and the figure smaller and smaller, more helpless and defenseless, his hands thrown up to the wave in an acceptance and supplication that was the only possible defense.

In the early mornings, on the cold stone outside his window, he would sprawl in the darkness facing East, leaning his head against the walls of his room and hearing through them the sounds that seemed to make insignificant all that they did not enclose, and they did not enclose the dying city and they did not enclose Anderson and they did not enclose the Ritz crackers that were all there was left to eat and they dwarfed the rising waters. The enormity and the correctness of the



double violin concerto or the 6th Brandenburg or the Chaconne in D minor were waves themselves, waves of intensity and piercing light, like the light of the dawn that rose in pinks and rosy blues, washing through his transparency and splashing against the walls to the rhythm of the music, overwhelming and terrible, splendid and remote, motionless and changing, until spinning and helpless in deluges of sound and rising light, in a flood that would have no abatement, he dissolved into the music and into the color, exhausting joy of tone, and shuddering and at peace, he would watch the morning come.

When a month was gone, he and the others were all ghosts, with filmy layers of memory or visions; their thoughts and their words had divided them from each other, islands now in the rising ocean that was lapping at their feet, and whether they saw it with terror or with clinging faint hopes or with resignation, still it rose. And for Roger it held no more horror, for he saw the wave in his painting as the music, and he wanted the avalance it would bring. He lay much of the time, utterly silent or chattering to himself or talking to Billin when he came in. But Billin would change into Anderson, shaking him awake to stand watch at the radio, and it didn't seem fair, because each time he would have to say goodbye to Billin all over again, and sometimes Billin himself would change into people that Roger knew or imagined he knew, and he would have to say hello and goodbye to them too, so much to put away before the final dissolving and once there had been others in the hall too.

And still he listened to Anderson and pretended sometimes to listen to the radio, for Anderson was forcing the others to obey, fiercely repeating, "Do you want to die? Do you want to die?" until they cowered. And Roger had heard nothing on the radio for a week, but was afraid to tell Anderson, because then he might try to stop him from watching the sunrise.

And it was the 39th day since they gathered the water when Anderson stormed into Roger's room and shouted, even in his weakness, "You've been using your water to paint!"

"It's my water."

"We may need that water. We're not dead yet. We're out of food, but plenty of men have lived a long time without food, but nobody has without water."

"It's my water."

"Help may be coming. Maybe they've found some way to stop the waters. Maybe the day after we die of thirst because you've kept your lousy paint in those jars instead of water, they'll come here and find us dead, when the water could have saved us."

"It's my water." Why didn't he understand? Why didn't he let him alone? The air rippled and everything blurred for a second, and

then he saw Anderson moving, slowly, thickly, each motion extended and unbelievably intense, tottering towards his desk where his painting lay, picking it up and (no! Roger wanted to yell, but his mouth and head were full and he forgot the word) tearing it down the length in a rip that took a million utterly silent years until finally the pieces drifted turning and curling to the floor and then the sound, the monstrous hiss reached him. It roared through him like a thunder, like a torrent, like the Bach! and strength came back and he stumbled to the door, leaning on the jam and shouting, shouting with the wind of his music. You can't stop it Anderson, you can't, it still comes do you hear it? Listen to it, Anderson, let it crush you it's all that will survive and is the only thing to die to, not to hope but to beauty let me die, Anderson, let me die, . . . and he fell back and surrendered to the music that still sounded and hearing with no ears and hearing beyond his mind.

Roger woke once more, the next day, in darkness with the air only an occasional gasping current, remembering Anderson and Billin and the others, and wondering if they were dying too, wondering where the waters would take them then forgetting them forever and feeling lost until the music began, soft streams of Bach that grew richer and louder and calling him home to rest and it was himself singing and he was calmed and he began to dissolve into the water and into the music. Goodbye feet, they are disappearing there are no feet my body ends at my legs my hips my waist, goodbye stomach goodbye chest arms neck. And still singing as the waters rolled over his brain goodbye mouth goodbye lips and the light and colors blurry and quivering goodbye eyes . . . my there comes the sun how beautiful so beautiful goodbye sun goodbye eyes and still sing

*Jon Lomberg*

*Reflections*

Approach! And spin-off where you please:  
Now soar on scores of lonely seas,  
An emerald blazing on your brow,  
To purple sands and jeweled trees  
To lands with shores of gold.

And now:

The tempest cracked your snowy cloak  
And gem-green hood when mountains broke  
And fell in storm and thunder's roar.  
Now see in burning boulder's smoke  
The turrents of grim Fántomore.  
And now:

To Kroda's frozen fords!  
To battle clans of fierce ice-lords  
Whose crystal beards flash in the sun.  
To Rūr where men wield diamond swords,  
To Alion where men wield none.  
To Dorien, to Calidor,  
To Sūn, to Brelanimor,  
To gods and devils, flames and grass,  
A universe upon the floor,  
Infinity in shattered glass.

*Jon Lomborg*

*"Correspondences"*

There is no reflection in this place  
Of mine  
(I have lived too long alone  
Without you  
Within me)  
And the sun burns loud  
In bloodstreaked clangor, lurid  
Hums of unconnected grief wheeze forth  
Behind the stifling cloak, sustained  
Lest light reveal the shadow  
Dance on rocky shores dried up  
    Receded roar of voices  
    Lilac trees  
    Assorted human noises  
    Tongue's soft tease  
    Are gone  
Bleak shadowless terrain of flattened  
Mounds — once grand — now worn with feet  
That wander in a round  
Of stepless starts and startless steps  
Of silent song and tuneless tongue  
In search of her  
In the deaf rock mountains  
(Whose eyes shone brightly once  
In luminous night  
With my shadow's kiss)  
Again to feel  
Anything  
Not moth from chrysalis, child from womb  
But shriek from graveyard, bones from tomb  
Of ancient remembered spring

Times my tears would have saved,  
Days when sap was sweet  
Milk, and spilt blood trickled into all things:  
The robin my epitaph  
My son.  
Days when you, once mother, wore perfume,  
(Proud of your fertility,) and as I changed  
You stayed young, ageing only me in joyful knowledge —  
My love, pregnant with herself.  
And in lilac's shade I cried joy to



My brothers, surrounding with song  
All who would listen and dance.  
I could see my smile  
In their faces,  
And my song echoed back  
In their laughter:  
My shadows danced free  
In the firelight,  
And my love swung her  
Hips with the vines;  
The landscape teemed,  
And the earth quivered pregnant always.

Few are left, from those far days:  
Most have embraced the dust  
Jumping heedless  
Into the pit, buried in the stone  
Prepared by hidden benefactors.  
And those I meet see me not,  
Gray eyes are cloaked with idle tears,  
Seeing only damp despair,  
Lost ears hear only inward groans,  
And they shake with the palsy  
Of their own crumbling limbs.

(All is still:)

Trees ring no more with the cries of  
Bathing girls — bells in the blue-eyed air.  
Only echoes rise  
From the earth's dark womb,  
Dim palpitations of a barren  
Rack-bound mother  
Who swallowed, in shame,  
The shrivelled fruits of a  
Thousand harvests,  
Now shudd'ring, mournful,  
Unable to cry, trembling with  
Pangs of remorse,  
Impalpable as  
Steam on a hot stove, swift  
As the passing warmth of  
A faceless stranger's touch  
In an empty station.  
But they mourn.

I wander  
And wail,  
In hope of waking  
The stillborn children in the deaf rock mountains  
To cry in ecstasy  
Of pain .

When rocks are tired  
With my tears, and the earth  
Flows freely as a shifting morning sky,  
I shall sing to the  
Child girl tombed in my ear, who whimpers  
Like the humming heat above:  
"Curtain me in dancing  
Flames of flesh;  
Let us be a flower,  
Your delicate  
Leaves will shelter raw thorns  
And rough stem  
Like May grass;  
Let bright petals, soft silence  
Painted by the sun  
Shade my vanishing breath  
(Still faintly sweet)  
With the joyous perfume  
Of its own holy light;  
And let us be as a rod."

So will we seed the harsh earth  
With the image of our love  
With lilac songs  
From our single breast.

*Rethy*



*Midsummer*

Each man is in his Specre's power  
Until the arrival of that hour  
When his Humanity awake  
And cast his own Spectre into the Lake.

*Blake*

*I. The Statue*

On a crystal lake of silent echo my queen's marble  
Statue shines in the moon: long nights I have spent  
Sundered, long springs have awaited her steps  
And in self-feeding sorrow I mourn the retreat:  
Now lost, in despair of denying the frost  
That has bleached the red fount — churning warm — to pure stone.

Cool winds float rocky sighs from the moated isle  
And her quivering shadow breaks glassy bounds, to  
Ripple past blinders as eyes unused to day  
Hide from the frightening glare: turned inside I see  
Him, his hair aged snow-white hangs in shaggy clumps  
And from breathing eternal in cold northern air

Great icy tusks curve down from his nose, and his lips  
Gleam blue as the sea. He holds in his chest —  
Transparent ice dungeons — a woman in silent repose.  
As she cries, tears fall, and freeze round her loins:  
Each drop is her coffin, dead sorrow his food,  
As she moans his chest heaves, and the cold win blows strong  
And I shudder in warm summer air.

## II. *The Party*

Across the lake an organ sounds and women  
Wail with the chord. I tear open my eyes in a cold sweat  
But the statue, serene, still clothed in white light, my queen  
And her crown, bound by robes of pure silver, fair Athena  
The wise and her consort, the moon, are frozen in silent  
Disdain. Nathal's voice rings loud over dark solemn chants, as

Naked she calls me on Midsummer's Eve. At the party  
She writhes under dim red lights, rhythmic, alone, and her flesh  
Glistens steam while she squirms on the rug, and her eyes  
Flash hot lightning that stabs through my chest: tiara  
Of diamonds and pearl-laden sceptre now cast  
Off, encasement she no longer needs as she sings

Like a siren, Rahab and serpent. I trip over  
Bodies, females scream frightful: sunken, in torpid red room  
My love laughs and hisses, throws open her arms.  
I kneel down before her to gather lost raiment, and  
She turns to run off with another, young, swarthy,  
Whose teeth are sharp daggers, whose skin seethes with sweat  
And I shudder in Hell's sultry air.

### III. *The Brothel*

I have run to the brothel, from torments of love:  
There Julia the harlot is lounging, bedecked with black silks.  
The air is suffused with the weight of dark perfume, and  
Blue light illuminates all. She lies there, thighs gleaming  
In the close heavy air, the white heat of her body  
Churns waves through cold deserts, as summer's new power  
                                melts ice in my bones.

Inside Julia now, and her heat is my heat, tired  
Red-rimmed eyes close in the pain of sharp passion.  
Turned inward, I see him, he seems to me weeping.  
Large drops now surround him, cold walls start to crumble,  
He floats in a sea of his own milky blood and the  
Female inside him wails loud and heaves long. Legs

Thrashing, head lunging, she claws at his chest,  
Frees chafed bleeding loins from the torturous bonds.  
Her eyes blaze

In madness, his bosom flies open, the red raving fury  
Now rid of her shroud, shrieks in delight at her captor's  
Destruction, and hips shudder, fast as the hot wailing cries  
Spew seed into Julia's dark kingdom of sighs  
And I weep in the arms of deliverance  
Soon to lie in sweet pastures of dawn.

*Sonnet: Atlantis*

Mist becomes flood and surrounds me.  
With fearful ease, now shorn of armor  
I dive in the ocean of limited death  
And hidden wish: to discover  
The smooth untarnished stones underneath  
In the tear-salted depths of the sea.

There also afloat in the skeletal light  
A mermaid is mounting a seahorse, unreal,  
Somehow familiar, playing with eels:  
I swim toward her shape and she laughs.  
We hear. Silence, nimbus-cloud night,  
Gossamer surface breaks: heart beat fast  
I hold my breath until morning when sweet  
Loves mourn unheard, secret waves sigh in retreat.

*The Hunt*

Rapacious eyes glint steel daggers  
In tired autumn light as fresh from  
Bordellos to conquer the woods  
With rifles and bludgeons: They come

Who wear soft coats, lined with the fleece  
Of unborn lamb, and whose shoes, hide  
Of cattle, lizard-skin, gleam sunlit  
And their fangs shield rotting flesh. She shield

From their steps, full breast bleed warm milk, light  
Feet barely wake wet wilted leaves.  
Her breath fails, her knees quake, in some mindless  
Prayer for hidden child. Her stomach heaves.

With hearts aquiver they smell fear  
While wading through lakes: lips froth-bound  
Scream vicious, besmirching the silence,  
Philomel sings, falls dead on the ground.

Her brown skin danced in filtered  
Sunlight. Ears cocked, she fell in flight  
To the sound of serpents thrashing blighted  
Ground, mud trailed on carpet. Tonight

O: to feast on sweet sinews of sad-eyed  
Innocence, split bones with gnashing teeth, and  
O: to mount majestic female head on  
Mantle, soothe slippered feet before the all  
Enfolding fire, red with the new-born fall.

*Rethy*

*"I Druid Memories"*

I await you here  
In darkness my only friend silence  
And the occasional screech of an owl  
As the trees awaits the pointed rays  
Of the dawn to know  
Itself see its shadow feel the bark slowly  
Burn the sodden lamentation of night  
Dew the soft issue of sorrow

I await you here  
In silence my only friend darkness  
And the towering shafts of the storm  
As winter's tree awaits the crown  
Of brambles to hear  
The roots grumble hungrily and crack  
The moldering earth dancing to  
The sound of newborn birds their mother near

I await you here  
The sand sifting beneath me dust  
Cluttering my thoughts sap flowing  
Inside songs streaming through my veins  
With no one to sing  
You have gone or never were I dream  
In a castle of liquid walls I am locked  
On a grey mountain rising

From the sea you wander lost  
To the rotting maze the deluded wizard's  
Home searching my barren hallways  
Cold echoing rooms damp and cobwebbed from  
Being left so long  
Alone asleep I await you here your hair  
A sorrowing waterfall of gold trembling down your neck  
Your voice a new bird's mourning song

*Rethy*

*Child man by night light*

The child's friend daylight has forsaken him

Swallowed in the night his feet the feeble roots  
Of a storm troubled flower drag at the ground  
His body shivers like a reed in the breeze  
And the fire in his chest makes his eyes steamed mirrors  
His breath factory waste embraces  
The overreaching clouds an old man's beard

He stumbles clasping the garments  
That fly like flames from his flesh  
Or like petals in a storm they seek  
To be strewn in freedom on the earth  
His tongue rattles dumbly when he weeps

A child abandoned cries tonight the stars  
His fathers deafly shine for others

*Rethy.*



*The Six Important Days*

Before the first day there was nothing in the sky or on the ground to say the task he took upon himself would not succeed; there was no wind, no sign of snow or rain, and the sunlight tumbled noiseless from the high and metal throats of spire-cocks. In fact, the blue was broken only by those gleams of cock-eye silver and the harlot sun, who, sometimes veiled in red or hid in grey, invited peak and climber to accept her easy warmth, her easy loveless lies. The cold had not descended yet to crack and tear the stones that lay above the mud and named the roads; nor had that killing breath which moves and strikes unseen begun to rise. Broad bands of meadow-green made far away a map, a spring collage, of bright chalets; a what, a why: when there is this below, what need to go above? To make all clear to show my worth to men was his reply. And so he stopped, content that should day be he was prepared and fit to meet the course.

Departure: day is spent upon the slope. There is no rush to see the inn beneath — to see a hill below a hill does not make great the man who climbed to see. Instead, the push is from the light into the dark; the savage hiss and click begin to count and tick-tick chip to etch the surest way. The mountain bleeds and cries dry dusty tears and foot-nail tracks like trophy scars, the wage of battle, measure of the task appear. When night fell he could look upon the way the day had moved, the way the sound had said: Go forth and be the first to kiss the bowl of shadow night from high above its lips; ignore the empty pain which you must bear; finish, achieve, and then the fame will come; and then receive, deserve the right to be. And happy in the way the day had gone he dreamed and was content until the dawn.

The second day: the sun is coy and cold.  
Deserted, he begins the trail without  
her early lie, but not alone. Thick threats  
of grey now played the condor role and sailed  
silent, greedy, in the daytime sacred  
heavens; and so he stops before they swoop  
and dive to rend and tear the joy which went  
before, and clears himself a place to keep  
a watch against the pure but evil sky.  
He works, designing up and down to come  
and won't allow the "nothing done today"  
he lays upon the log to claim his cheer.  
He smiles content to squat and so divide  
the weight the clouds contain with his own will,  
and so he sits between above, below,  
and listens for the sound of second night.

The third day also shook beneath this wide  
ledge-like expanse of grey, and once awake  
he dared to tempt what ever, snow or rain  
or sleet or hail, to leave the shelter clouds  
so he could show his master skill to be  
the greater in a test of that day's climb.  
He threw his pack across his back and laughed  
a rude and surly thunder-noise; then picked  
his way to reach the present goal above.  
But his will proved the lesser of the two,  
the earth ripped, yawned, and shivered awed by winds  
which scourged and whipped the green to stand alive  
and he deferred content with just an inch  
along the route that he had hoped to pass;  
planted his camp and waited for the snow.

The fourth appeared beneath the mounds of white  
he knew would strike him blind in days to come,  
but yesterday had shown the strength which lay  
untouched, untrapped, unseen in day to day,  
and so he pushed ahead without regard  
or fear of what would later be. The wind  
cut more severely than before, and rolled  
and roared and knocked about his load from high  
above the cliffs he sought to scale. And forced  
to take the side the sun disdained, he bore  
the spiteful gust, made light his load, and swore

the harlot sun, though ruler then, would see  
him blessed the seventh day upon the peak  
despite the gleam and glare she aimed below.  
The fifth arrived and he could look below  
like some Olympic king with wizened brow  
and see the stupid town that lay asleep  
in day to day, and then forgive. It took  
no time at all to trace the mill the inn  
the stream which winded through and all about,  
the flow of life itself disguised by haze;  
and all the thieves who cried to stand as he  
who then refused to climb to gain the prize.  
He knew that few would dare to walk his way  
and so was sure to win a name and be  
above the rest who'd covet and believe.  
With fall of night he stopped and hung his soul  
before himself and with its box beside  
to test the truth of what he thought he learned  
and saw that with the seventh he'd succeed.

A slow mud-sun lounged in the sixth day sky;  
and bent he leaned into the day's behest.  
The wind was calm and cooed from time to time;  
the snow now iced still hid the marks and signs  
which make the map a boon for those who seek  
the way that's known to few. He proud set out,  
snailgait, upon the way, secure, the goal  
not far, would be achieved; and so he oozed,  
the pain of labor gone, the amnia  
about to break, upon the pins he used  
for feet. He thrilled to think the flag he'd wave  
atop the peak would be the last to see  
the old and nameless shell he wished to kill;  
and when full spent he sighed and closed his eyes  
he knew that he must rest and spend a time  
before the consecration was complete,  
before men would allow, create his strength,  
before the praise, the worship was begun,  
before he'd truly reach his proper state  
the seventh and the later days to come.

*Good Times, Wonderful Times — Just Fade*

Sharp crackle: hissing juggernaut arrives thick  
black rejecting balls of daytime light  
with evil glint yet beautiful as mother-hog  
the flower-banded bands are snapped and plucked  
to twitch beneath the squeal of shatter noise:  
the halt, applause, the march, the silent thunder  
rolling hateful in the pollen-mire there: arrived  
and Deutschland's followed father polished gleaming  
grown-up child is met with crashing airs learns  
swastikas that pucker for the winds and skies to kiss  
that snap salute Sieg Heil with patriotic zeal for  
hanging paper chancellors who may day wooden soldier  
step and suck the sweet demented filth of their own lives  
not awed by that behemoth there that weeps and sways  
with silly frenzied self-degrading brute love gloved  
and belted buckled leathered tusk unseen the bristles  
ridged beneath his snout a well known sign which says  
this sheet this man is Fuhrer takes the car  
and almost smiles to see new Pandemonium arise  
then: petal shrieks, and songs, child-laughter  
and hurrah die Gott sei dank des deutschen Leute  
no one mourning for that precious oder-oil pressed out  
into the gutter day which should have bathed the  
countryside another time and those of those who stood  
below the palace plate the human meadow would be  
richer soil but only swallowed swill for those  
who wallowed then amid the screams and cries  
the angled arms and tilted heads but  
what of we who wince hind flicker sight like  
this but won't agree that Texas clad with stars  
and stripes by caddillac above the muddled avenue  
displayed can not be seen again Napoleon must we  
just fade . .

*Michael A. Williams*



*I Am Leaving*

I am leaving the fiery  
    bricks of my desire  
to the plump old buddahs  
    of my prayers  
Let some airy tower be built  
    from my waning heat  
There all can turn and bow  
    when the call begins to groan  
through their dark cavernous bellies

Besides I have my own stone clocks  
    to keep my constant time  
To be wrapped in the gauzy blue air  
    to give way to the black smiles  
from the crooked streets  
    is to surrender  
Tomorrow I will play tic-tac-toe  
    with a super-blue upon my wrist  
It is my way of saying  
    I love  
and no one can eat me or  
    spade me under piles of clouds  
and orange moons and bitter limes

There is an aged hill  
    sleeping in my eyes  
with bearded pines and toothless oaks  
    We've all seen enough to know better  
but still the reaping continues  
    as the bloody fingers are plucked  
from the sanguine vines and pressed  
    into a sweet and bitter wine  
Another sip of the pungent drought  
    as we lose our breath in the  
shuttle-machine of time



In the dark cathedral of my hands  
 the red-necked children are warring  
 and some will win and some will win  
 and  
 "Now now none of that  
 Better rest lie back now  
 Heave the pariah dogs  
 your useless furry bodies  
 into the gapping black ravine  
 of your balding hopes  
 Around the corner in winter  
 you will find a set of teeth  
 sprouting from an elder tree  
 Follow for the way will be clearly marked"

But but listen  
 My heart has a neon sign  
 streaming blue from it  
 Vancancy Vacancy  
 It's the kind of place  
 where no one really stays  
 except of course broken-mouthed clowns  
 their painted lips like crude scars  
 ripped across their face  
 selling their bodies for the cold thrill  
 of a purple kiss within their palms  
 And also once in a grey while  
 a suicide stops in who  
 leaves  
 as soon as he enters  
 but no one ever stays

Perhaps like Francis I'll settle down  
 on a blade of tiger grass somewhere  
 roost in the boney fingers of the sun  
 and let the mad-eyed birds perch upon my belly  
 lay their eggs in my liquid eyes  
 I've nothing better to do

*Jay Bernstein*

*Conversation*

Though half asleep on my bed in the next room, I distinctly heard the door open and heard her quietly say, "I'm back". I could also immediately recognize in the tone of her voice that she didn't expect to be back so soon. I understood that in her tone of voice, and it was only later that I realized that I, myself, didn't expect her back so soon. For all this was happening as I was half asleep, still unaware of my own body, of my own life. With unusual clarity and precision, I could hear her moving around in the other room. But with my eyes closed, and all my senses muffled in a heavy quilt, the sounds weren't related to me at all. There was a purity and clarity in those sounds and in her voice that made them quite meaningless.

I had dreamed of voices in the other room. When I take afternoon naps, I never sleep very deeply, the day never entirely lets go. Sometimes if I've been reading a lot and the words begin not to make any sense, I take a nap. But in the nap, I dream of reading word by word, across and down page after page and never understanding what is being said. But recently, I've been talking a lot, as opposed to reading or writing. Where once I related to the world through books, now I want to reach it through conversation. So you see, reader, why this piece is basically a conversation. Yet it's a difficult conversation because quite frankly you aren't at all there. It is a conversation with myself and thus as my mother used to always tell me, the first sign of madness. For I'd much rather have you here, beside me, in flesh and blood. We could talk. If you were actually here and this were actually a conversation, it would be an entirely different piece. You'd be in it, both in what you say and in the way you direct what I say. Nor could I force all this on you. For you'd want to interrupt, butt it, disagree and criticise. Perhaps it's just as well then that you stay where you are. But then who is directing this conversation if not you?

That afternoon I had been dreaming of voices and like the written texts which followed word after word with no meaning, I hadn't understood. The voices had lingered quietly tying me to the day like the afternoon sunshine falling across my bed, lightened the night under my eyelids (until letting my arm rest on my forehead, my eyes once again are in shadow).

It wasn't until I knocked over the lamp beside my bed that I began

to find any sort of spatial quality in my body. Righting the lamp and putting the shade back was quite theraputic, a matter of helping my body find up-down or which way the gravity is pulling so I could stand up the opposite way. Standing up is an amazing operation. I needed the whole room in order to stand up. If while I was asleep (assuming my room was a perfect cube which it almost is) some one had come in and put my rug on a wall, nailed my books, bookcase, pictures, posters on the ceiling, turned the drapes horizontal so that they fell to the rug on the opposite wall, nailed all my chairs, record player etc. to the wall with the rug on it, I doubt whether I could trust gravity enough to dare stand up. For standing up requires a certain familiarity with the world and it's landmarks. But that afternoon, I stood up and began to sink deeper and deeper into the day.

The clarity of the sounds when she first entered was gone, my senses were filled with my own noises as I tried to find myself in the day. Leaning over a mass of papers on my desk I tried to find where I had left off, for the meaning of the room and the terrible mess on my desk seemed to beg for me to make some effective continuity with the past.

Four O'clock. Four O'clock. The day's half gone. So What? I looked at the work on my desk and I still wasn't deep enough into the day to answer for it. Somewhere in a very abstract level of consciousness there was a very good motivation for finishing all this work. But I was just testy enough not to be in very abstract mood, and just rebellious enough against the mechanics of a man's life not to sit down in blind obedience to habit and work until I found a reason for working. The law seemed like a long sleep from which I was just awakening. I felt like the man who built his house on the sand. Only it wasn't out of perversity or anything. I wasn't trying to make the guy who builds his on the mountain top look good or anything. I just built my house, and it is only later that I find out that I built it on sand and that in fact the tides already in.

So you begin to look for new ground. And just to save yourself a lot of moving and a lot of trouble you try and build on the highest ground you can find.

By then I was fully awake. I was trying to feel some need to work, I was looking for some mountain top. It was the Sunday after Martin Luther King died and I was waiting for the mountain to form under my feet and push me to a cleaner, statelier sky.

From my window, I could watch all the people who come to use the park on a beautiful Sunday afternoon. I love to watch people in parks because no where else do they seem to relax. On the streets, they have to be going somewhere, to be doing something, there's an end, a purpose in their stride that closes them off to a passer-by. Very rarely



are respectable American streets used for anything but getting from one place to another. But in a park, you don't have to be doing anything, time isn't a space from pt. A to pt. B. You can sit down under a tree and just smell the flowers if you want, and that's OK. People can do that in a park.

As I watched, the park becomes not just a series of isolated events and isolated people individually amusing themselves. For they are all overtly or indirectly sharing the park. It's a dance, almost a ballet. Everything is arcs and circles. A man running a circular pattern catches a pass on a dead run (and I could watch the play develop, first the ball thrown no where near where the receiver was, and then the gradual merging of the two). There's the arc of the football as it rises from the passers hand toward me and then falls into the receivers arms. A frisbee, defying gravity, floats quietly across the park. A dog who has picked up a dropped baseball whirls and turns like a prima donna, as he leads a pack of boys who chase him.

The dog ran through most of the separate groups, ran by most of the people lying alone on the grass. By watching him the dance was unified. The human activities were an amateur orchestration setting the scene for the matchless joy and grace in the dog's run.

The other day I had been out in the park, in celebration of the spring playing ball with another boy. It occurred to me then how much the ball was a link between us, how like words in a conversation, it was directed toward the other, was a way of extending the motion of our bodies. After we tired of kicking the ball we played basketball, making hoops out of our arms. And when we tired of basketball we played volleyball, and when we tired of that we went and had some ice cream. With each change of the game, the whole nature of the friendship changed, the volleyball demanding a close quick interchange; soccer, more individual, slower. I don't think that we could have begun by playing volleyball. It was as if the gradually increasing involvement of the other two games was leading us to the last. I doubt the interplay between us would have been anywhere near as complete if we hadn't kept changing the game.

But this was the Sunday after Dr. King was shot. With the rest of the city surrounding the park, and with the riots and violence of the last few days in mind, the park, so substantial before me was cut loose and floated on a dark sea.

Why did the abandon and grace I saw in the park suddenly become so unreal. Would you have everyone dressed in black, whipping and burning themselves. Where was the focus of the day? Was it in the fact that Dr. King was dead and the black city boils, how was it that the people in the park could seem so free when we all know so many are in bondage, when the country was officially in mourning; or was

the focus perhaps, in the beautiful spring day, a declaration that reaches most everyman, even one who doesn't read newspapers or listen to radios.

I'm reminded that the day I spent in the park was in many ways an escape from my work.

I turned from the window and turned on the radio. The newsman was saying that after a tense night, police, clergyman and responsible negro leaders had succeeded in clearing the streets. By twelve, it was fairly quiet. A group of the cities leading citizens, presidents of all the major companies had pledged their support in the rebuilding . . .

I turned it off. I knew that great man, that distinguished citizen. I know him when I pick up Laura after work at Aetna, he who has bound all these people in one vision, one way of giving peace and security to breadwinners of America. That great man's building and his business is the perfect testimony of the community lost, of the pessimism about people and the future. There's a lack of trust implicit in any bureaucracy, in any fragmented society.

The great man would leave a name, something that lasts. But the shape the size of this remembrance outweighs us. He has sunk into the luxury of responsible men running the great, apparatus of progress, until he can no longer move. What is progress if you cannot move and be a man. I know that man when I push someone on a fence and he falls — when it had been my fence, when it was I who asked him to sit down.

Yet, that great man has made it to a mountain top, too, but I knew him there in caves of ice and mountain snows.

These words to you, reader, aren't they, too, an attempt to shape something that lasts, a monument to myself. In a way yes. But it is a conversation. I'd much rather, as I said, have you here and we could talk. Then the words, the shapes of our expression would live only as long as we lived, as a kind of felt presence of the other, never larger than either you or I.

On the table beside my bed, there is a purple ribbon Laura left the night before. She loves purple. On entering a room that has purple in it, there is a connection made. She feels at ease, at home in the room. She wears purple as one would wear a jewel.

There is no end to where I could begin. I could sit down and begin to work. There's always something to be done. And I have no doubt that after working for a while I would soon convince myself (now that there was no going back) of the rightness of my choice. An enormous order and significance would most likely arise and I would soon again feel that I had arrived and found my mountain top.

But what do I want to do? As a child who has nightmares looks in the morning at the sunlit corners of his room and finds them empty,



I want to find those terrible people, shapes, animals and verticals, and exorcise them.

Last night, as I lay beside Laura, we could have lain in the dark and had nothing to say. There are so many ways that connect us together, a ribbon, time shared, being under the sheets like a letter in an envelope. And yet, there is so much that keeps us apart, our own thoughts, the lives we've lived before we met, our separate bodies.

She was running her hand along my back and it occurred to me that before the pleasure was numbed into a generalized sensation of friction, why not make a new meaning. So I said, try to say something now using my back and your hand that you couldn't say in any other way except by using a back and a hand. She did. It was a hugh, elaborate design that required my utmost concentration for the ten minutes of application. When she was done, all I could do was gasp and laugh in wonder and mock disbelief.

The conversation could go on, forever, reader, because as I've already pointed out to you, it's so onesided. But I'm not ending it because I'm tired of you. On the contrary. The story is simply a way of connecting you to me. And how can I be tired of someone who isn't here. Nor do I think I'll ever run out of things to say. I'm ending it here, mainly because I love that image of Laura drawing on my back and I can't think of any better place to end, or begin.

*"As I Look"*

As I look across the room, a sudden  
Sadness and beauty lights one woman's face.  
She has Genvieve's full lips, the same tension  
That surrounds well-dressed, cautious grace . . .  
(Genvieve's words, like a brittle mask  
Tempted me to look for the hidden mouth  
Till she wouldn't speak and flesh denied was cast  
For silence)

But who does she see in me?  
When this woman speaks the room  
Moves into her voice. In her voice  
There's a man's eyes felt on her skin  
And a woman who gives me a man's choice  
To fill up the room with my body's ends  
And touch her soft lips where her body begins.

*Alan Griesinger*